His Majesties GRACIOUS DECLARATION

To all His Loving Subjects for Liberty of Conscience.

JAMES R.

I having pleas'd Almighty God not only to bring Us to the Imperial Crown of these Kingdoms through the greatest Difficulties, but to preserve Us by a more than Ordinary Providence upon the Throne of Our Royal Ancestors: There is nothing now that We so earnestly desire, as to Establish Our Government on such a Foundation as may make Our Subjects happy, and Unite them to Us by Inclination as well as Duty; Which We think can be done by no means so effectually, as by granting to them the Free Exercise of their Religion for the time to come, and add that to the perfect enjoyment of their Property, which has never been in any case invaded by Us since Our coming to the Crown; Which being the Two things men value most, shall ever be preserved in these Kingdoms during Our Reign over them, as the truest Methods of their Peace

and Our Glory. We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed, That all the People of Our Dominions were Members of the Catholick Church, yet We humbly thank Almighty God, it is, and hath of long time been Our constant Sense and Opinion (which upon diverse Occasions We have Declared) That Conscience ought not to be constrained, nor People forced in Matters of meer Religion: It hath ever been directly contrary to Our Inclination, as We think it is to the Interest of Government, which it destroys by Spoyling Trade, Depopulating Countreys, and Discouraging Strangers, and finally, that it never obtained the End for which it was employed. And in this We are the more confirm'd by the Reflections We have made upon the Conduct of the Four last Reigns. For after all the frequent and pressing Endeavours that were used in each of them, to reduce this Kingdom to Intire Conformity in Religion, it is visible, the Success has not answer'd the Design, and that the difficulty is invincible. We therefore out of Our Princely Care and Affection unto all Our Loving Subjects, that they may live at Ease and Quiet, and for the increase of Trade, and Encouragement of Strangers, have thought fit by vertue of Our Royal Prerogative, to issue forth this Our Declaration of Indulgence, making no doubt of the Concurrence of Our Two Houses of Parliament, when We shall think it convenient for them to meet.

In the First place We do Declare, That We will Protect and Maintain Our Arch-bishops, Bishops, and Clergy, and all other Our Subjects of the Church of *England*, in the free Exercise of their Religion, as by Law Established, and in the Quiet and full Enjoyment of all their Possessions, without any Molestation or Disturbance whatsoever.

We do likewise Declare, That it is Our Royal Will and Pleasure, That from henceforth the Execution of all and all manner of Penal Laws in Matters Ecclesiastical, for not coming to Church, or not Receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Non-conformity to the Religion Establish'd, or for or by reason of the Exercise of Religion in any manner whatsoever, be immediately Suspended, and the further Execution of the said Penal Laws, and every of them is hereby Suspended.

And to the end that by the Liberty hereby Granted, the Peace and Security of Our Government in the Practice thereof, may not be Endangered, We have thought fit, and do hereby Straitly Charge and Command all Our Loving Subjects, That as We do freely give them leave to Meet and Serve God after their own Way and Manner, be it in Private Houses, or Places purposely Hired or Built for that Use; so that they take a special Care, that nothing be Preached or Taught amongst them, which may any ways tend to Alienate the hearts of Our People from Us or Our Government. And that their Meetings and Assemblies, be Peaceably, Openly, and Pub-

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lickly hold, and all Persons freely admitted to them; And that they do signifie and make known to some one or more of the next Justices of the Peace, what Place or Places they see apart for those Uses.

And that Our Subjects may Enjoy such their Religious Assemblies with greater Assurance and Protection, We have thought it requisite, and do hereby Command, That no Disturbance of any kind be made or given unto them, under Pain of Our Displeasure, and to be further proceeded against with the uttermost Severity.

And for as much as We are desirous to have the benefit of the Service of all Our Loving Subjects, which by the Law of Nature is inseparably annexed to, and inherent in Our Royal Person; And that none of Our Subjects may for the future be under any discouragement or disability (who are otherwise well inclined and fit to serve Us) by reason of some Oaths or Tests, that have been usually Administred on such Occasions: We do hereby further Declare, That it is Our Royal Will and Pleasure, That the Oaths commonly call'd, *The Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance*, and also the several Tests and Declarations mentioned in the Acts of Parliament made in the Five and twentieth and Thirtieth Years of the Reign of Our late Royal Brother, King *Charles* the Second, shall not at any time hereafter be required to be Taken, Declared, or Subscribed, by any Person or Persons whatsoever, who is or shall be imployed in any Office or Place of Trust, either Civil or Military, under Us, or in Our Government. And We do further Declare it to be Our Pleasure and Intention from time to time hereafter, to Grant Our Royal Dispensations under Our Great Seal to all Our Loving Subjects so to be imploy'd, who shall not take the said Oaths, or Subscribe, or Declare the said Tests or Declarations in the abovementioned Acts, and every of them.

And to the end that all Our Loving Subjects may Receive and Enjoy the full Benefit and Advantage of Our Gracious Indulgence hereby intended, and may be Acquitted and Discharg'd from all Pains, Penalties, Forfeitures, and Disabilities by them or any of them Incurr'd or Forfeited, or which they shall or may at any time hereafter be liable to, for or by reason of their Non-conformity, or the Exercise of their Religion, and from all Suits, Troubles, or Disturbances for the same: We do hereby give Our Free, and Ample Pardon unto all Non-conformists, Recusants, and other Our Loving Subjects, for all Crimes and Things by them Committed or done contrary to the Penal Laws formerly made, relating to Religon, and the Profession or Exercise thereof. Hereby Declaring, That this Our Royal Pardon and Indempnity shall be as good and effectual to all intents and purposes, as if every individual Person had been therein particularly nam'd, or had particular Pardons under Our Great Seal, which We do likewise Declare, shall from time to time be Granted unto any Person or Persons desiring the same: Willing and Requiring Our Judges, Justices, and other Officers, to take Notice of and Obey Our Royal Will and Pleasure herein before Declared.

And

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